

Wisconsin Aviation Hall of Fame



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE...

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WI Aviation Hall of Fame to Induct Five at Fall Banquet

MIDDLETON, WI. March 10, 2006 – Six Wisconsin aviators will be inducted into the Wisconsin Aviation Hall of Fame at a banquet to be held this fall.

Robert Clarke, Robert Skuldt, Elwyn West, Ralph and Robert Huggins and Capt. Lance Sijan will be recognized.

Robert Clarke has been a Designated Pilot Examiner for over 35-years. He began flight training in 1948 and became a flight instructor in 1955. He worked for nearly 20-years as the Chief Flight Instructor and Chairman of the Flight and A & P programs at Gateway Technical College in Kenosha, WI. Clarke was also a ground and flight instructor at Fox Valley Technical College in Oshkosh. He has accumulated over 13,000 hours of flight time in various aircraft.

Robert Skuldt grew up in Madison and became interested in aviation after seeing Charles Lindbergh land in Madison in 1928. Skuldt received his license to fly in 1940. He became a flight instructor two years later, and taught U.S. Navy pilot trainees out of Morey Field in Middleton, WI. In 1943, Skuldt received a direct commission as a 2nd Lieutenant in the U.S. Army Air Corps. He flew 72 trips “over the hump” in World War II. Skuldt returned to Madison after the war and became one of the original officers in the Wisconsin Air National Guard. He retired from the WI Air National Guard as a Colonel. Skuldt was the manager of Dane County Regional Airport for over 34-years.

Elwyn West was born in Waupaca County, Wisconsin in 1901. He took flight instruction at Diggins Flight School in Chicago. He purchased a WW1 surplus aircraft and returned to central Wisconsin. He barnstormed throughout the state and upper Michigan. West was the manager of the first Appleton, WI airport.

Ralph and Robert Huggins, brothers from Honey Creek, WI, began flying together in 1919. In 1930, Bob became a pilot and instructor for Waukesha Aviation Association, which became the Waukesha Flying Club. Ralph worked as a mechanic and pilot with his brother Bob. Bob was a flight instructor who instructed many Wisconsin aviation legends.

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2006 Inductee press release continued...

Capt. Lance Sijan was born in Milwaukee in 1942. He was a graduate of the United States Air Force Academy. He piloted an F4C Phantom and was assigned to the 366th Tactical Wing, Da Nang AFB, Vietnam. On his 53rd mission, Sijan's plane was shot down. He ejected from the plane, and evaded capture for six weeks in the jungle. Shortly after he was captured, he escaped, even while suffering from head injuries and a broken leg. He died as a prisoner of war in December 1968. Sijan was posthumously awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.

The inductees will be enshrined at a ceremony to be held in the Eagle Hangar at the EAA Museum in Oshkosh on October 14, 2006. Plaques will be presented to the inductees and then permanently displayed in the Fergus Plaza at the museum. The public is invited. Tickets will be available later this year by calling Michael Goc at 608-339-7191.

The Wisconsin Aviation Hall of Fame was organized in 1985. Over 70 men and women who have made significant achievements to aviation in Wisconsin have been inducted. The goal of the organization is to collect and preserve the history of aviation in Wisconsin, recognize those who made that history, inform others of it, and promote aviation education to future generations.

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